

Thank you for supporting the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus. Every year, millions of Americans are physically or psychologically attacked on the basis of their skin color, ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, religion, or age. Addressing the bullying epidemic – in our schools, in the workplace, in assisted-living facilities – is a concern very close to my heart. It is our responsibility as human beings to empower the individuals who are discriminated against, scapegoated, and silenced by society.

I know, firsthand, the pains of being bullied. As a Japanese American born at the height of World War II, I was placed in an internment camp before I could walk or talk. For many years after the war, I endured confrontations and insults from my peers solely because of my appearance. I had a few courageous friends, however, who transcended the discriminatory norms of the time. Their support, together with the wisdom and guidance from my parents, helped me realize some powerful and liberating truth; Japanese Americans had been treated unjustly—bullied by the U.S. government—because of “war hysteria, racial prejudice and a failure of political leadership” at the highest levels of leadership. I came to understand that our nation’s founding principles support a more inclusive America, respectful of sex, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, race, political philosophy, and age.

In the seventy years since internment, our nation has made leaps and bounds in reparations for the internment and ostracizing of individuals of Japanese descent. Today, however, America is threatened by an epidemic where more than thirteen million children are teased, taunted, and physically assaulted by their peers each year—embodied in racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, or simply means of letting go of aggression and bottled emotions. This bullying is not confined to classroom walls; the fear and hurt that so many people feel in America today is an urgent call to action. As an educator of more than thirty years and a member of Congress who was bullied as a child, I am inspired to do my part. That’s why I founded the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus. The Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus will be a premier forum for individuals and advocates from private sector organizations and non-profit agencies, educators, students, and everyday individuals, along with Members of Congress, to proactively address issues of bullying.

As Chair of the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus, I appreciate your attention and support for holistically understanding and addressing the different aspects of bullying. On behalf of the Anti-Bullying Caucus, we thank you for your commitment and look forward to fostering a more inclusive and vibrant society.

Mike Honda
Member of Congress
Chair, Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus